UPSTART

NORTH CAROLINA HOUSE STUDY COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION INNOVATION – OCTOBER 22, 2014

UPSTART United: Preparing Students Today for A Rewarding Tomorrow

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UPSTART: Today's Outline

- Dr. Claudia Miner, Waterford V.P. Of Development & Director of UPSTART

  – Overview of the UPSTART software

- Sheri Ebert, K-3 Literacy Utah State Office of Education

  – UPSTART implementation in Utah

  – Research and outcomes

UPSTART: Overview

UPSTART: Utah Preparing Students Today for a Rewarding Tomorrow

Kindergarten Readiness

- Cost of preschool tuition.
- Desire to keep children in the home as long as possible.
- Utah's rural areas: obstacle of transportation

- UPSTART was designed to support preschoolers to be kindergarten ready.

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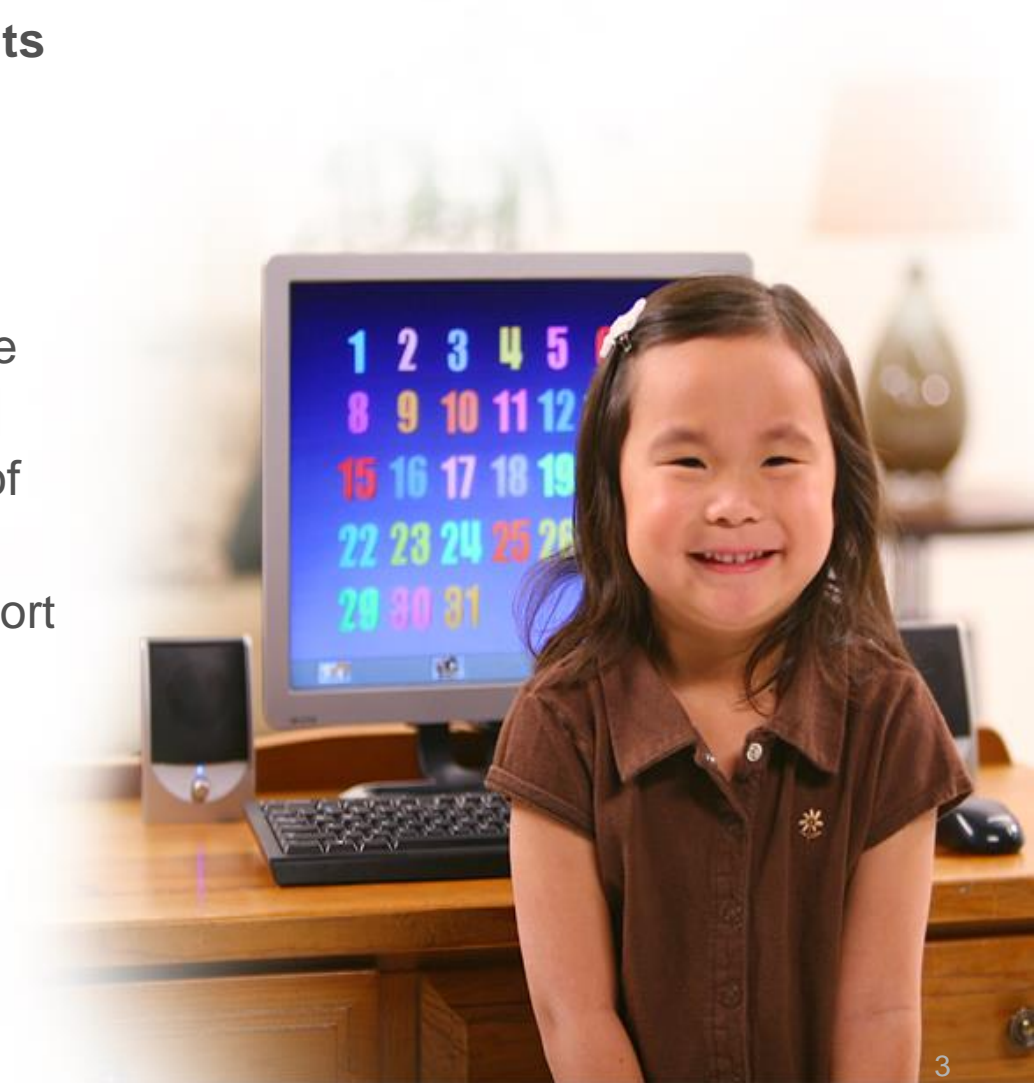
UPSTART: The Pilot

- Utah Legislature: UPSTART five-year pilot to support Utah's preschoolers' to be kindergarten ready.

- Legislators: Implemented the UPSTART pilot with strong reporting requirements and an even stronger external evaluation component.

- Utah State Office of Education oversaw an RFP process, and the non-profit Waterford Institute was selected.

- UPSTART is a collaborative effort : Waterford Institute, Utah Legislature and the Utah State Office of Education.

- Utah SB 148 (2014): UPSTART pilot renewed an additional five years.

UPSTART Software

DR. CLAUDIA MINER

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UPSTART's Unique User Support

UPSTART's dual-language support organization maintains frequent proactive contact through

- written materials

- in-person and online training

- E-mails providing support and ideas for offline activities that parents can do to help prepare their children for school

- motivational phone calls

This support system forms a partnership with parents to ensure children get the most from the program's learning opportunities.

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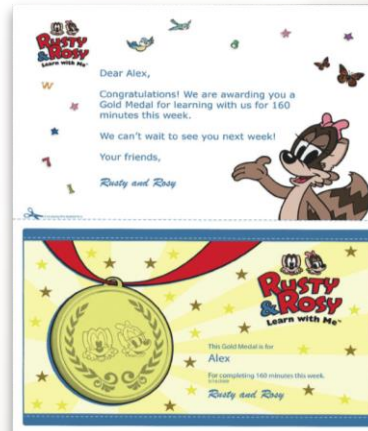
Educational Software Package

Waterford Assessments of Core Skills™ (WACS) adaptive computer-administered test

Rusty and Rosy Learn with Me™ adaptive and sequenced core curriculum

*Camp Consonant*™ multisensory tutoring software

Rusty and Rosy Learn with Me

- Sequenced to provide individualized learning

- 2,500 + lessons

- 7,000 + activities

- 360 digital books

- 330 animated songs

- More than 450 instructional hours

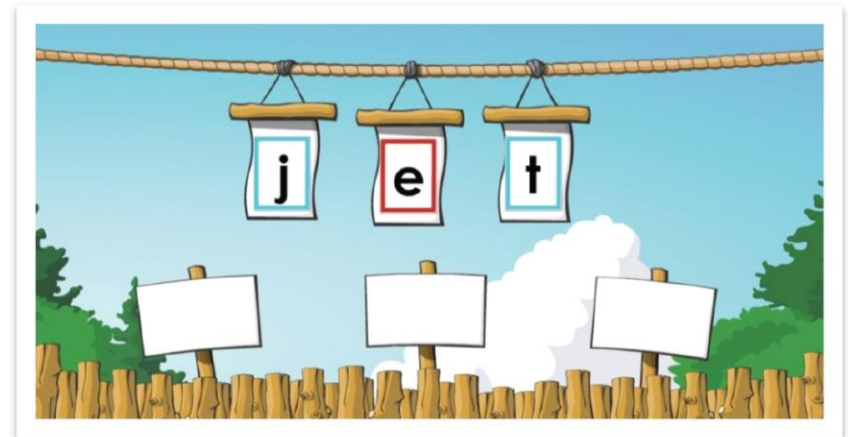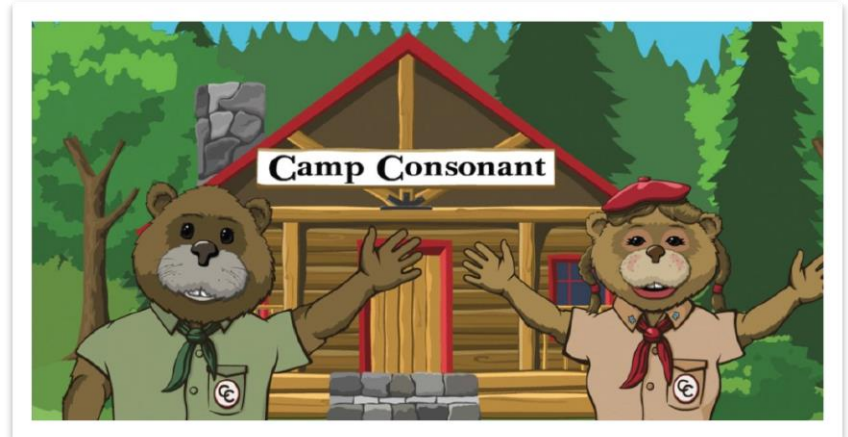- Hundreds of printable resources

- Progress reports

Correlations

- **100%** – Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

- **100%** – NAEYC's Guidelines for Curriculum Content

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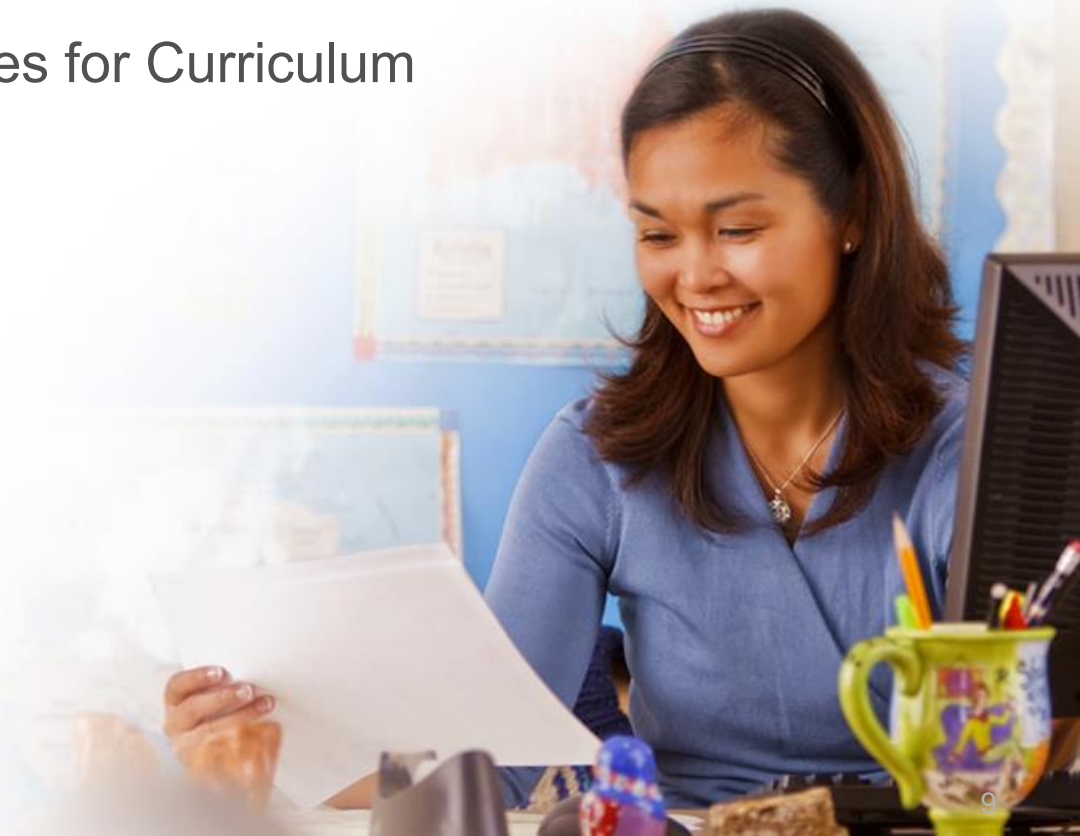
Camp Consonant

- Over 2,700 individual activities

- More than 150 hours of instruction

- Books, songs and videos

- A built-in system of reinforcement that rewards children's efforts

Waterford Assessments of Core Skills

- Based on five years of research and aligned to both national and state standards

- Children are screened two times during the year at specified, controlled locations

- Children are screened in ten key pre-literacy and reading skills

- Support staff and parents are provided with a full range of a child's capabilities rather than just a satisfactory or unsatisfactory assessment
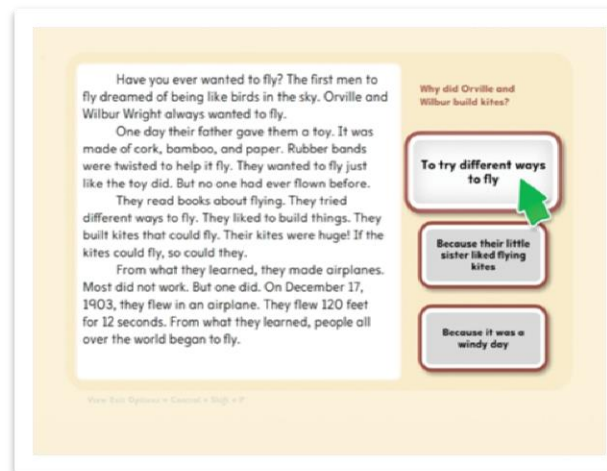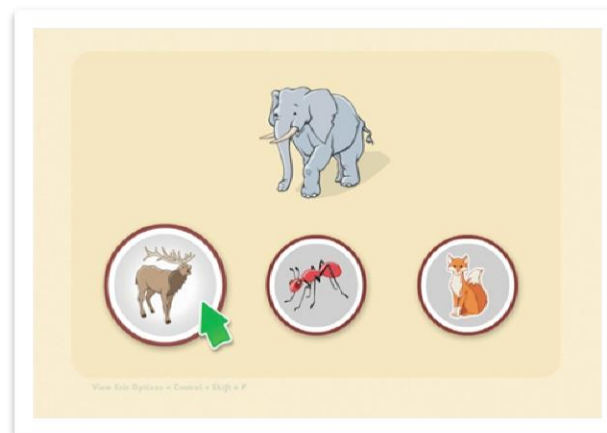
Measuring Results

- Usage is a key indicator of results and tells if parents are engaged in motivating their children. Software usage is tracked for each child and reported on a weekly basis.

- *Waterford Assessments of Core Skills™* gives a pre-program baseline and a post-program evaluation.

- The external evaluator for the program uses a treatment and control model to evaluate the program.

- Finally, parents' feedback about the program and how to make it better is extremely important for planning.
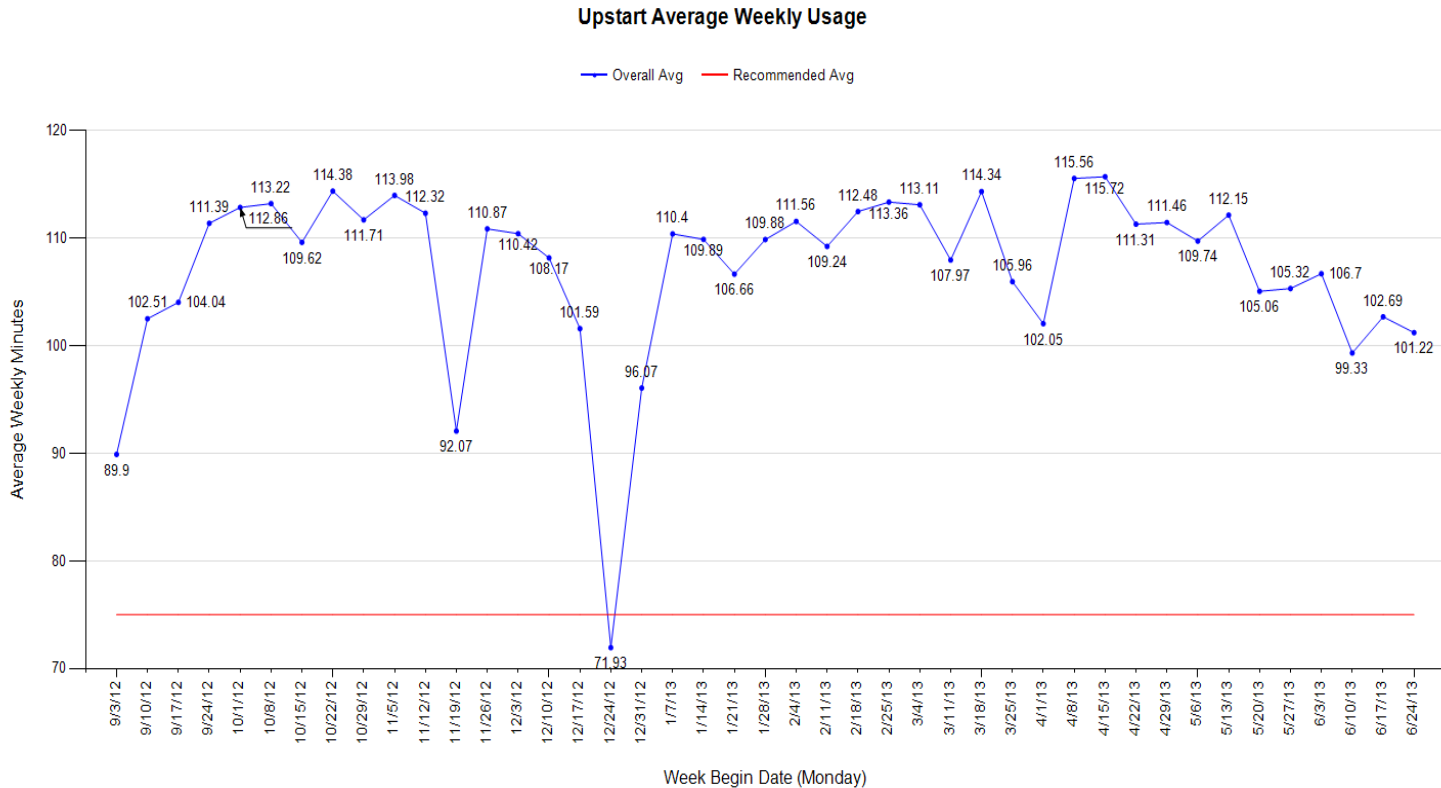
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Utah Results—Usage

- Consistent usage is key to each UPSTART child's success.

- UPSTART aims for 75 minutes of weekly usage (15 minutes a day, five days a week).

- Average usage for Year 4 was 107 minutes per week.

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Year 4 Usage

Summary of Key WACS Results

- The average child in UPSTART entered kindergarten reading at the Kindergarten Advanced level.

- Gains were greater for low-income children and for children not attending other preschool.

- Overall gains were not significantly different regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, parent education level, or geographic locale, indicating all children benefited from the program.

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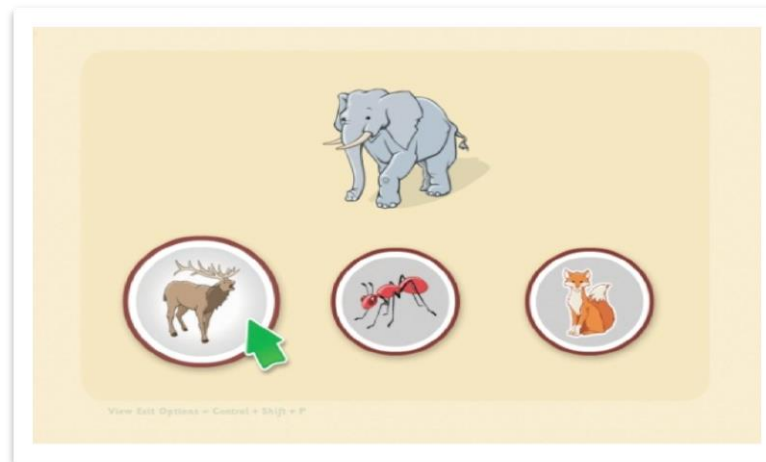
"Super Vetting": the UPSTART i3 Grant

- On November 8, the U.S. Department of Education announced the results of the fourth round of the Investing in Innovation (i3) competition. Waterford's UPSTART application in the amount of $11.5 million was announced as one of the highest-rated applicants for a Validation Grant. The project is an expansion of the UPSTART program in Utah's 18 most rural school districts. The final award was made on December 23.

- **The i3 grant program only awards Validation Grants to programs that have strong evidence of results.** Altogether, i3 selected 25 grantees from 618 applications. Previous i3 grant recipients have included: WestEd; Teach for America; KIPP Foundation; Johns Hopkins; and the Smithsonian.

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UPSTART: Utah

SHERI EBERT: K-3 LITERACY SPECIALIST
## UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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UPSTART: The Program

- Support students identified with

at-risk indicators

- In-home school-readiness Waterford software: Supporting the acquisition of foundational literacy skills.

  – Alphabetic Principle

  – Phonological Awareness

  – Comprehension & Vocabulary

  – Oral Language Fluency

- Parents and caregivers as partners.

- Computers and internet are provided if the home does not have them.
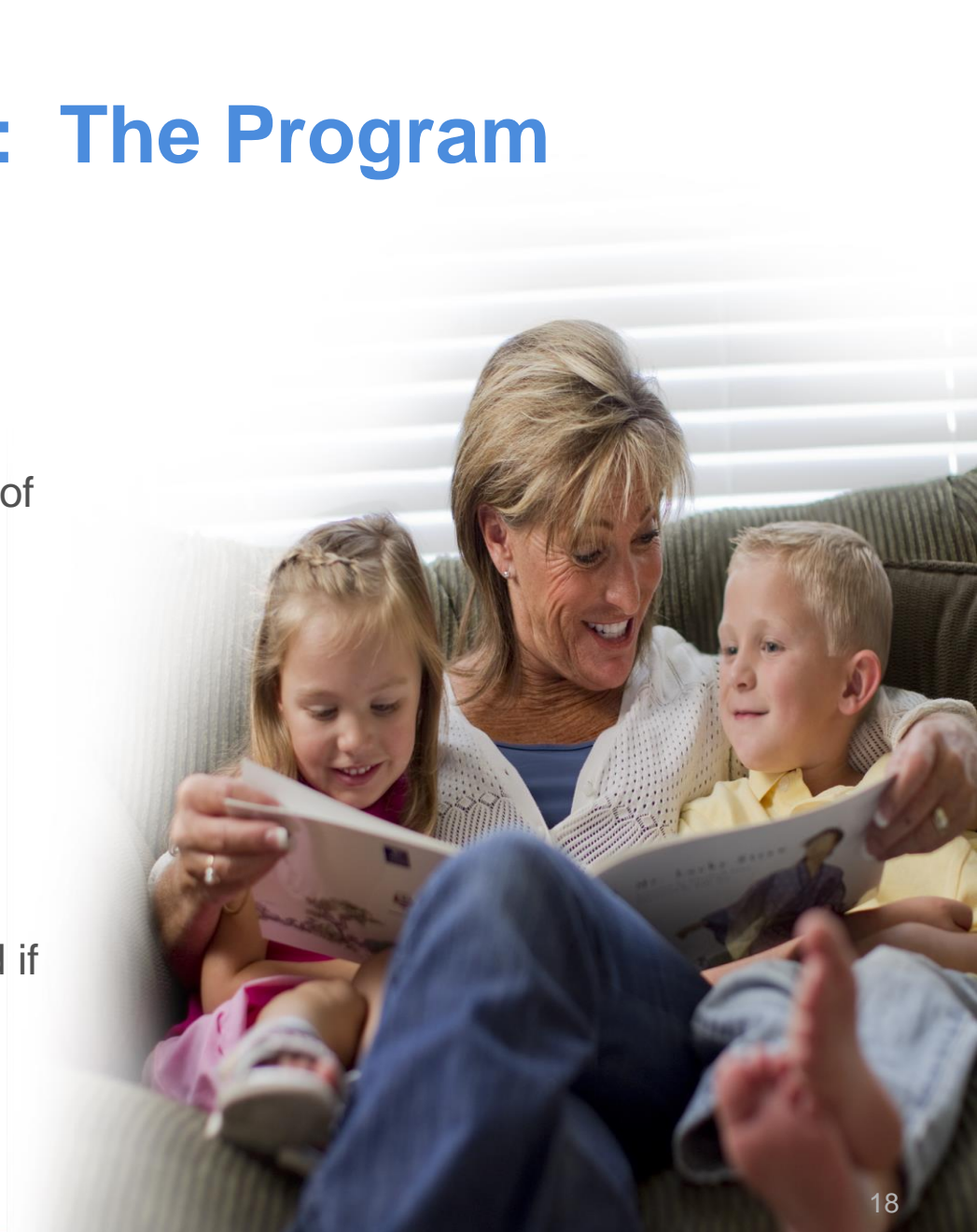
Utah Legislation Executive Summary

- Each October: USOE presents the UPSTART executive summary to the Utah Board of Education and The Utah Legislation

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Preschoolers Enrolled

- Six years: approximately 12,500 preschoolers representing all Utah school districts, have participated (about 6,500 total for years 1-5; 6,000 total in year 6).

- Year 4 (63%) of the 1,250 preschoolers enrolled were from low-income families.

  - This was an increase of 26% from 2013
  - Year 5: 73%

- Demographics 2014: Caucasian (76%) with 20% being Hispanic. The ethnicity of the remaining 4% was of Asian, African, Native American, Pacific Islander, or unknown origin.

WACS Assessment Data

Cohort 4 WACS Reading Scores - Grouped by Subtests
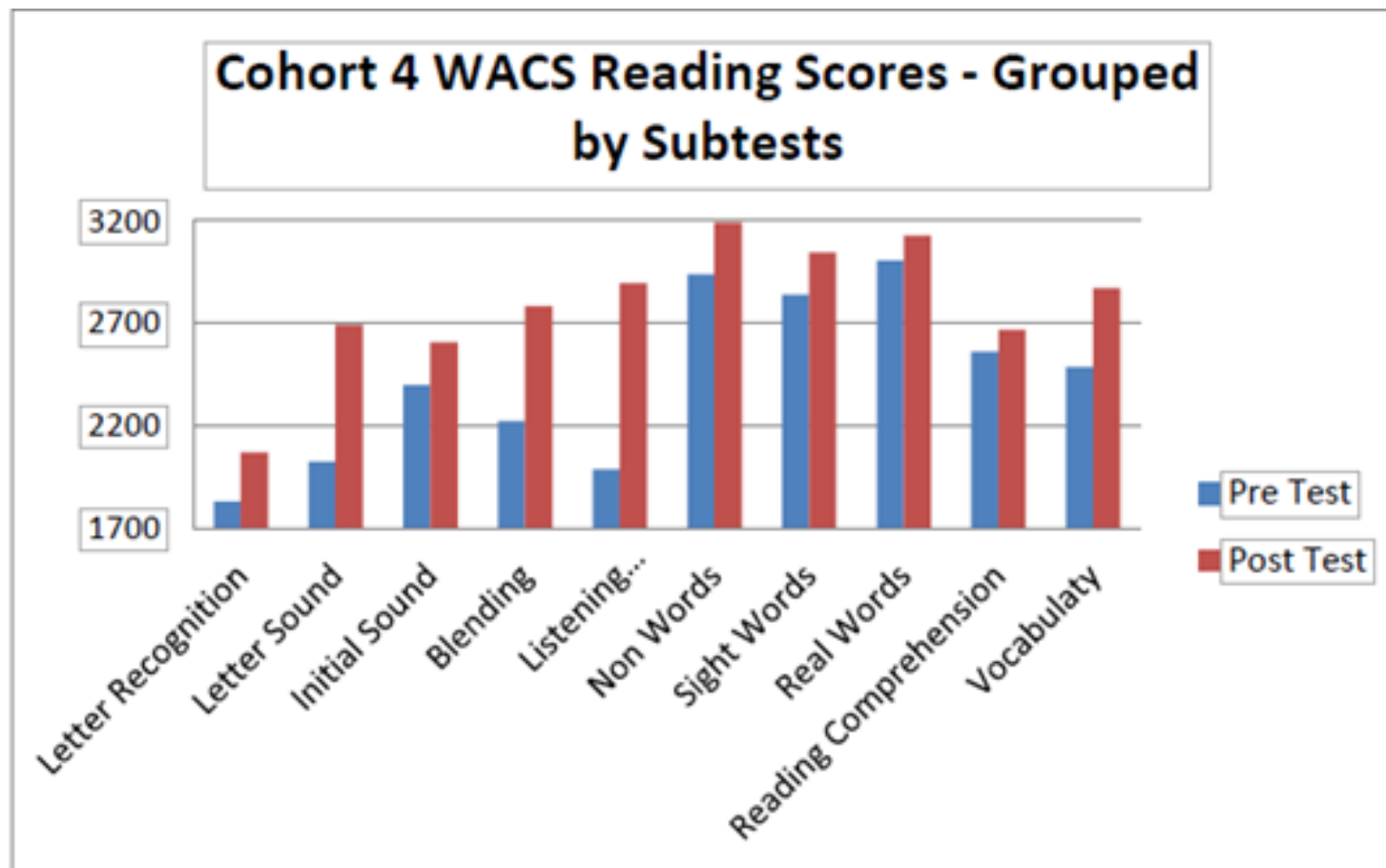
External Evaluation: UPSTART Year 4 Outcomes

- Brigance: phonics and vocabulary knowledge

- The Bader: phonological awareness.

- WAC: Waterford Assessments of Core Skills

- Quasi Experimental:

  - Control & Treatment Groups

  - Parent Surveys

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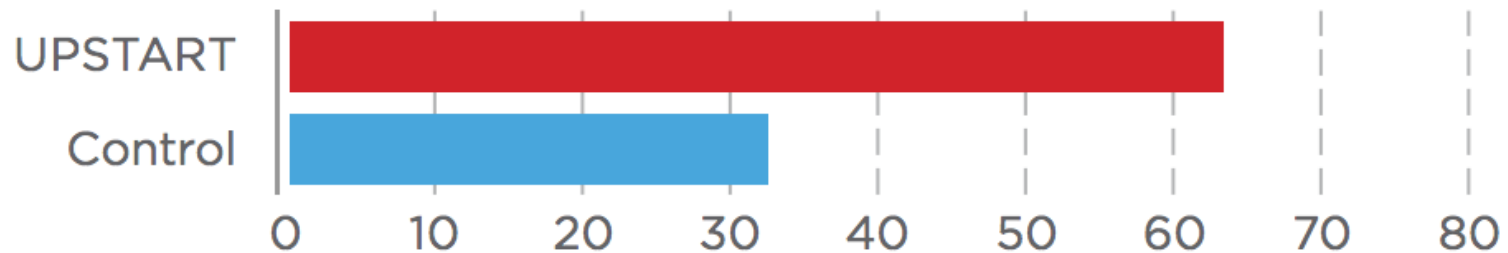
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UPSTART: Year 4 Results

- Do UPSTART students have better literacy skills at kindergarten than control students?

- Do UPSTART children show stronger literacy growth rates from preschool to kindergarten than control group children?
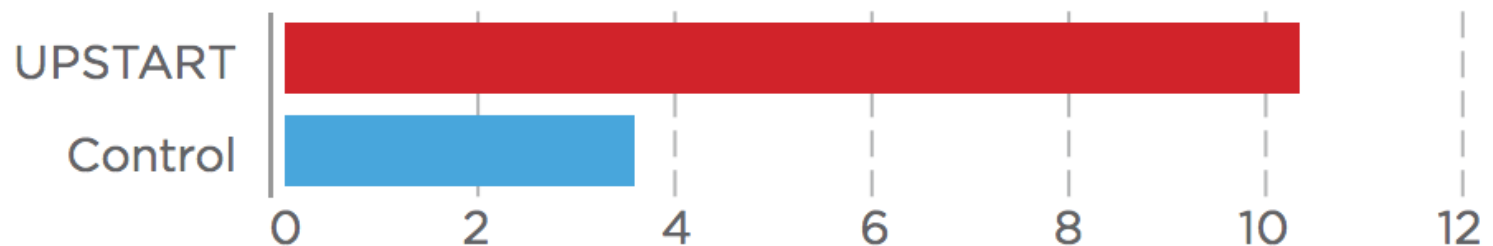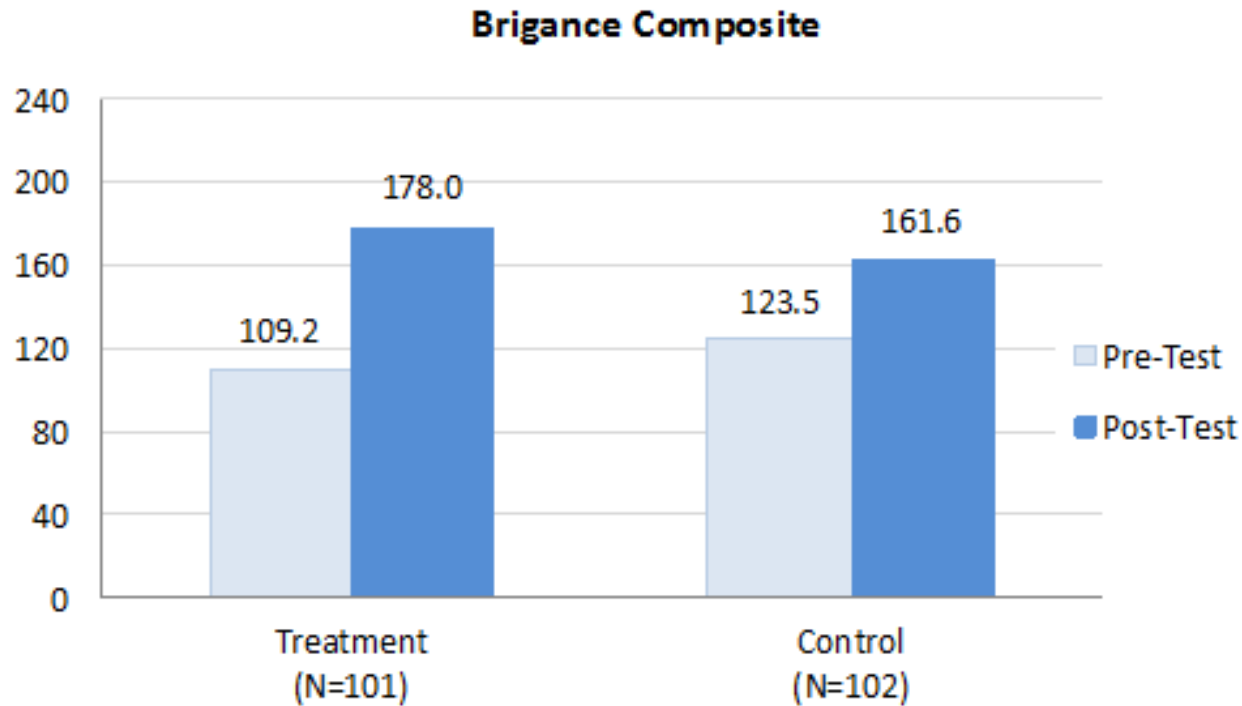
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UPSTART External Evaluation—Year 4

Brigance Growth Rate Comparison

Bader Growth Score

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Brigance Subtest Mean Graphs: Pre- and Posttest Scores

Brigance Composite

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Bader Subtest Mean Graphs: Pre- and Posttest Scores

Bader Composite
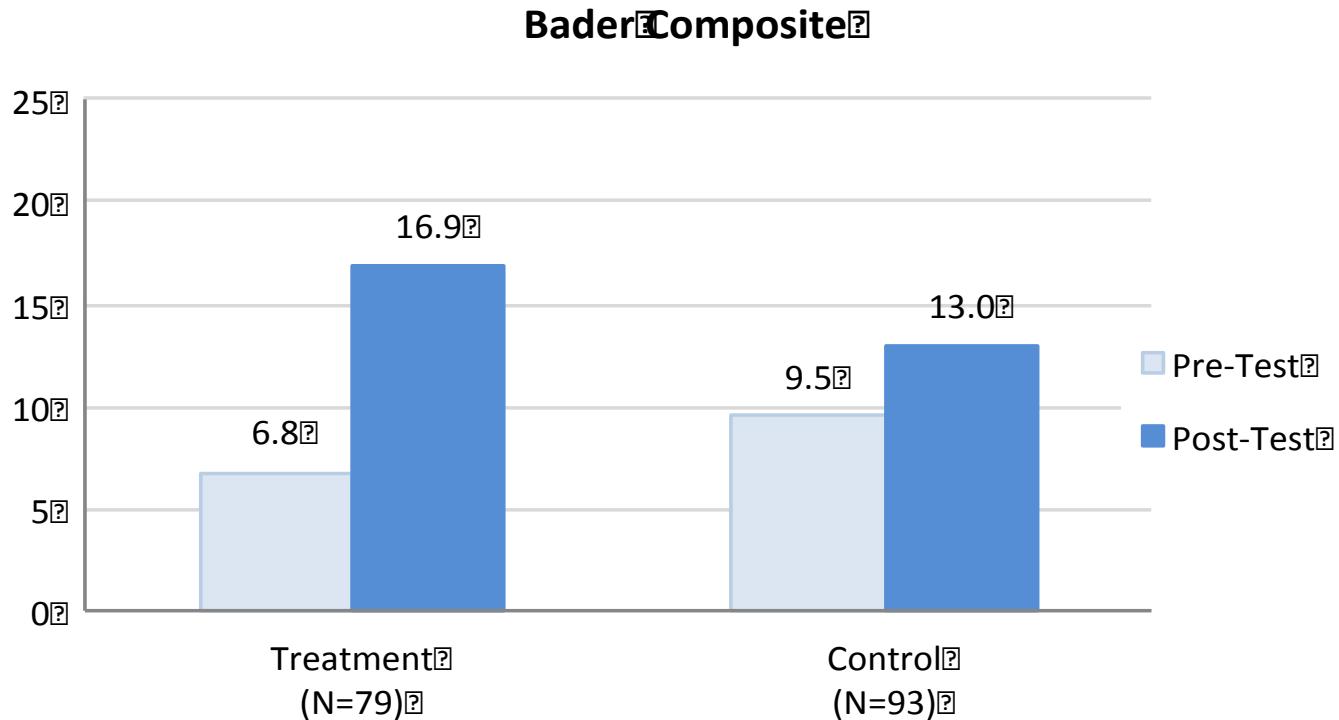
Parent Survey

898

Utah parents and caregivers in Year 4 voluntarily completed program evaluations

99.3%

felt UPSTART helped prepare their child for kindergarten

99.8%

said participating in UPSTART was beneficial
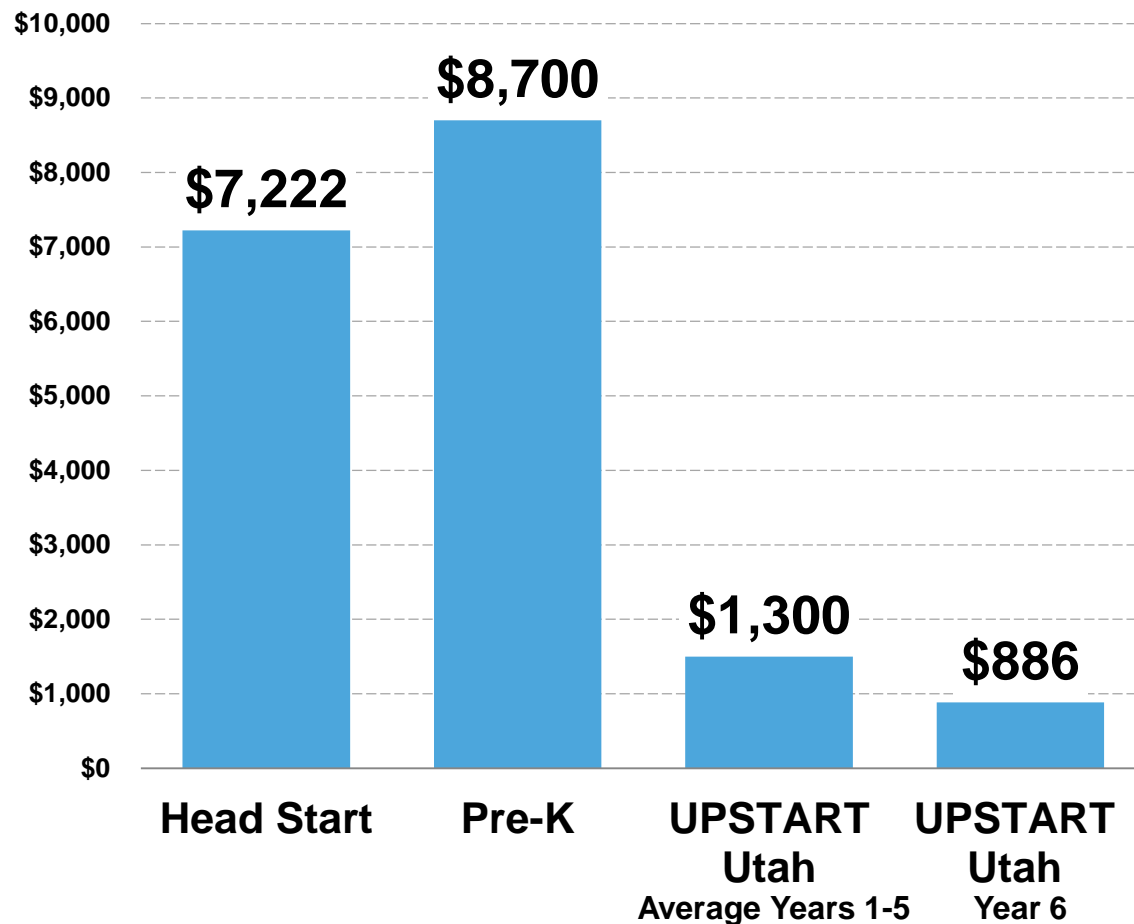
99.4%

would recommend the program to family and friends

91.6%

felt the content was appropriate for their child's age

97.9%

felt that the children enjoyed the software

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Annual Cost Per Child
for School-Readiness Programs

1) The table reflects the Head Start Bureau estimate of $7,222 per child (Douglas J. Besharov, Justus A. Myers, and Jeffrey S. Morrow, "Cost Per Child for Early Childhood Education and Care," August 31, 2007, p.3). Note: Besharov, Myers, and Morrow estimate the cost at $9,381 per child, but the table here represents the Bureau's figure.

2) The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) in 2002 estimated the cost of providing a preschool education at $8,700 per child (NIEER Website Fast Facts). Note: Besharov, Myers, and Morrow estimate the cost of a full-day pre-K program per child is $12,570.